

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 R

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----- 028234

O P 220001Z JUL 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 172995

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, PARM, ASEC, PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL AND NATO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

REFS: A. USNATO 3849; B. LISBON 4109

HOLD FOR OPENING OF BUSINESS.

1. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR AMBASSADOR BRUCE'S TIMELY COMMENTS
IN REF A.

2. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE ALLIES BE SENSITIVE TO THE
SECURITY OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION, AND THAT THEY CONTINUE
TO PURSUE FORMAL AND INFORMAL ARRANGEMENTS TO RESTRICT
THE FLOW OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION TO PORTUGAL. WHAT IS
DONE FURTHER IN THIS REGARD, HOWEVER, MUST BE JUDGED IN
RELATION TO THE LARGER ISSUE OF PORTUGAL'S FUTURE ROLE IN
NATO. THE QUESTION OF SECURITY SHOULD BE DEALT WITH, BUT
IN A WAY THAT DOES NOT PREJUDGE PORTUGAL'S OR OTHER
SECRET

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ALLIES' POSITIONS ON THIS MORE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE.
ANY NEW, OFFICIAL STEPS TO RESTRICT PORTUGAL'S
ACCESS MIGHT PRECIPITATE A SHOWDOWN WHICH COULD IN FACT,
AS AMBASSADOR BRUCE POINTS OUT, AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF

PORTUGAL'S INTERNAL TURMOIL. FURTHER, WITH SITUATION IN
PORTUGAL UNCERTAIN FROM DAY TO DAY, WITH THE CSCE SUMMIT

APPROACHING, AND WITH AUGUST COMING AS A PERIOD WHEN
RELATIVELY LITTLE SENSITIVE INFORMATION IS INTRODUCED
INTO THE NATO SYSTEM, WE SEE GOOD REASON FOR HOLDING OFF
UNTIL THE IMPLICATIONS OF ANY QUARANTINING MEASURES WOULD
BE CLEARER. (THIS PERIOD WOULD ALSO ALLOW ALLIES TO
SIZE UP NEW PORTUGUESE DCM.)

3. WE CANNOT OFFER ANY ESTIMATE FROM WASHINGTON OF
RISKS OF COMPROMISE BEYOND AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI'S GENERALLY
PESSIMISTIC ASSESSMENT IN REF B. WE NOTE THAT PRESENT
QUASI-FORMAL SYSTEM OF RESTRICTING PORTUGAL'S ACCESS TO
ATOMAL AND COSMIC TOP SECRET INFORMATION DEPENDS ON
VOLUNTARY ABSTENTION ON THE PART OF PORTUGAL, AS DOES
NON-PARTICIPATION BY PORTUGAL IN SENSITIVE MBFR DISCUS-
SIONS. THESE ARRANGEMENTS COULD OF COURSE BE TERMINATED
BY PORTUGAL, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS AT RISK OF PRECIPITATING
THE SAME TYPE OF SHOWDOWN AS NEW, FORMAL NATO STEPS MIGHT
ENGENDER. WE VIEW POSSIBLE INFORMAL STEPS DESCRIBED IN
REF A, WHICH FOCUS ON INCREASING OVERCLASSIFICATION TO
COSMIC TOP SECRET, OR SIMPLY WITHHOLDING SENSITIVE
INFORMATION BY OTHER ALLIES, AS IMPERFECT SOLUTIONS. IN
THE LONG RUN, THEY COULD MAKE THE ALLIANCE'S WORK
EXTREMELY CUMBERSOME, AND BECOME A TRANSPARENT WAY OF
QUARANTINING PORTUGAL WHICH MIGHT PROVOKE A POLITICAL
REACTION; THEY WOULD ALSO PROBABLY REQUIRE RESTRUCTURING
ALLIED MEETINGS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS, IN EFFECT
CREATING A SERIES OF RUMP GROUPS, MINUS PORTUGAL. WHILE
WE DO NOT WANT TO DISMISS SUCH STEPS, WE DO NOT WANT TO
ENCOURAGE THEM AT THIS TIME WITHOUT A CLEARER ASSESSMENT
OF HOW THEY WOULD WORK, THEIR IMPLICATIONS, AND THE
VIEWS OF THE ALLIES.

4. MISSION MAY DRAW ON ABOVE AS APPROPRIATE IN JULY 23
DISCUSSIONS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLIANCE, SECURITY, CLASSIFIED INFORMATION, RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE172995
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/RPM:VLEHOVICH:MEM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 XGDS-1
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750253-0536
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197507106/baaaapzt.tel
Line Count: 99
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 OCT 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <30 APR 2003 by MartinML, 3.4.X6>; RELEASED <22 OCT 2003 by buchantr>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, PARM, ASEC, PO, NATO
To: NATO INFO LISBON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006